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Letter dated 1 June 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement (see annex) that my delegation had originally intended to deliver, as Chair of the Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, at the Security Council meeting on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question", held today.

It is deeply regrettable that our request to be included on the list of speakers, in accordance with rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, was not accommodated owing to the objection of one permanent member of the Council.

Preventing a Member State from expressing its position on an important matter in its region is against the very spirit and letter of the Charter of the United Nations.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative

18-08833 (E) 050618

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Annex to the letter dated 1 June 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement by the Republic of Turkey at the Security Council meeting on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question"

We are here today, once again, to talk about the injustice and suffering that the Palestinians have been enduring for decades.

While the illegal occupation continues, the Palestinians now face the ill-intended efforts to erode the established parameters for a perpetual peace.

And, to top it all, they are struggling for their right to life: the most fundamental of all human rights.

What we have been witnessing in the last few weeks is a total disregard of all the values we have vowed to uphold since the establishment of the United Nations system and a clear violation of international law.

We need to remember what has happened. Turning a deaf ear to the calls of the vast majority of the international community and in violation of international law, the United States Administration decided to implement its decision of 6 December 2017.

The Palestinian people chose to peacefully stand up against this irresponsible act. Israel responded with impunity and deliberately targeted and killed 62 Palestinians, including children, on 14 May in Gaza. Once again, it failed to comply with its obligations under international law. It refused to assume its responsibilities as the occupying Power, in particular regarding the protection of civilians.

A total of 118 Palestinians, including 15 children, have been killed and thousands injured since the beginning of the Great March of Return. These are not just numbers; these are human beings.

Targeting civilians has no excuse, no justification whatsoever. International law dictates that even in wartime, civilians are not to be attacked or harmed. No State is above the law.

Turkey, as Chair of the Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), convened an extraordinary summit in Istanbul on Friday, 18 May, to express the collective reaction of OIC to the latest developments. As mandated by the final communiqué issued at this summit, we will continue to support our Palestinian sisters and brothers in any way we can in their request for protection and accountability.

Kuwait, with the full backing of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, took an important initiative and prepared a resolution with the aim of ending the embarrassing silence of this Council in the face of the loss of human lives.

Regrettably, today, the United States used its veto power to block a resolution on the protection of civilians that calls for full respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law and condemns all acts of violence against civilians.

The Council once again failed to shoulder its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. It is becoming all the more difficult to convince the international community on the credibility and relevance of the Security Council.

Let's face it: the international system of values and principles that we have established together is faced with serious flaws and blows. It is our collective duty to stand up against this. We have to show that common sense and respect for international law prevail. The system must be set right. We will continue to voice our strong objection to injustice. We will not get used to it. We will not give up.